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To: Senate Agriculture Committee Members

From: Tonia Ritter, Manager State Governmental Affairs

Michigan Farm Bureau (MFB) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments regarding our strong support for elimination of feral swine – pigs that are in the wild.

MFB member developed and adopted policy shares the concern voiced by many individuals. We do not want feral swine. We agree with the concerns about feral swine damage to natural resources, crops and disease issues. Our policy affirms that, stating "Feral swine cause a tremendous amount of damage to Michigan's natural resources and private property. MFB supports the statewide eradication of feral swine."

MFB also appreciates the opportunity to comment on the need for a strong regulatory structure for sporting swine facilities. For the past four years, MFB has advocated putting regulations in place for sporting swine facilities, so that we could eliminate the "bad actors" in the sporting swine industry, but also recognize that pigs owned by an individual and under that individuals' control is private property. Our policy calls for this regulation to be balanced with recognition of private property rights and investments that individuals have already made within the boundaries of existing laws.

Since 2008, MFB has had member-driven policy in place to support the elimination of feral swine and strict regulations for sporting swine facilities. Our current policy reads in part, "We support the elimination of swine in the wild, and a moratorium on new swine game farms until new rules are developed and implemented.

We support the development and implementation of management practices and rules for swine hunting operations. These rules should include disease testing for incoming and outgoing animals, fencing requirements and record keeping methods. Animals imported from another state or country must have appropriate state or federal health certificates. Additionally, swine hunting facilities shall only be populated with sterile animals or have permanent, individual animal identification. All farms providing animals to swine hunting facilities must have permanent, individual animal identification on all swine before reaching 50 pounds, and prior to leaving the premise."

Based on this policy, it is imperative that the bills contain:

- Strong fencing requirements
- Permanent animal identification requirements
- Disease testing requirements
- Annual herd reconciliation
- Movement and testing requirements for incoming and outgoing animals
- Provisions to offset the cost of regulation
- Fines and penalties for those that do not follow the regulation

We thank Chairman Joe Hune for introducing these bills and bringing them before the committee for consideration. For too long we have been asking to have a sound set of regulations for the sporting swine industry; regulations that will weed out the "bad actors" and allow those who can meet the high bar of regulations the opportunity to continue operating their business.

Michigan Farm Bureau supports the concept of the bills, and will continue to work with the sponsors and stakeholders to refine the legislation and address our policy concerns.